Good practices for the self-assessment of QAAs for ENQA Agency Reviews

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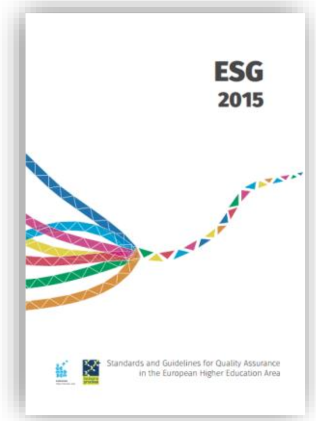
Why self-assessment?

- An agency’s opportunity for critical self-reflection!
- Part of ENQA Agency Review for membership in ENQA and other purposes (e.g. registry on EQAR)
- Membership criteria: **the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)**
- Average of 12-15 reviews/year (5-year cycle)
- 4(5) panel members including an academic and a student
- Support from ENQA coordinator
- Process of 12-15 months: SAR, 2,5 days site visit, ERR

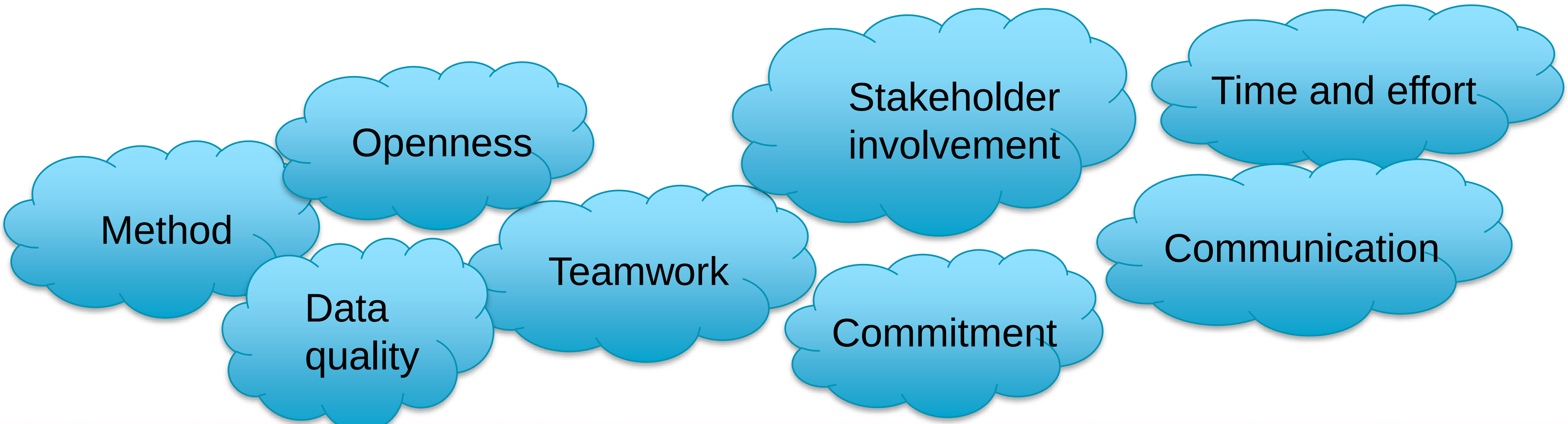


Initiation of the process → Self-assessment → External evaluation → External review report → Approval and decision-making → Follow-up

- In 2018-19: external review of ENQA Agency Reviews (coordinated by the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education - NIFU)

Self-assessment report is not a goal in itself!

- SAR – the final outcome of a whole self-evaluation process
- Internal self-critical reflection – what works well? What could be improved? Who do we usually don't have time to talk to and reflect on our work?
- Strategic positioning of the self-evaluation process in the agency – can the activity serve any other task of the agency apart from an ENQA Agency Review? (e.g. new strategy design, reporting to the government)
- Quality of the SAR depends on many contributing factors:



What is important to consider – general remarks

- Assign **a team responsible** for the process and build the support of all involved stakeholders
- Take into account the views of a wide range of **stakeholders** to inform self-evaluation
- Agree on the **timeline** for the development of SAR – a clear indication of what each contributor is expected to provide and when
- Reserve **enough time** for writing/editing
- Look both **backward** and **forward** – SAR not only states what has been achieved but also reflects on what could be done to enhance activities in the future
- Follow the **structure of ENQA Agency Reviews' Guidelines** and use clear **language** (if applicable, consider other purposes of the self-evaluation and how they fit the process)
- **Minimum description**, maximum **analysis** and **self-evaluation**
- **Dissemination**

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ANNEXES

ANNEX I: GUIDE OF CONTENT FOR THE SAR

The self-assessment report should follow the provided main structure:

1. Introduction
2. Development of the self-assessment report (SAR)

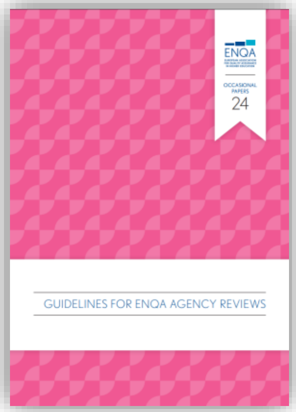
Describe the means the agency has used to develop and produce the SAR (appointment of a team, involvement of stakeholders, etc.).

3. Higher education and QA of higher education in the context of the agency

Describe the higher education system and the evaluation of higher education in your country/ context (as relevant).

4. History, profile and activities of the agency

Describe the history, profile and all activities of the agency as well as its position and status in the national context (where relevant) and its compliance with the national requirements.



Tips to write a good SAR

✓ Be concise

The recommended length of the SAR is **around 60 pages** (excluding annexes). Try to save space where possible, e.g. there is no need to copy the text of the ESG guidelines in your SAR (the ESG standards are enough).

Up to **10 annexes** (in English) – annexed documents provide further background to issues described (don't forget to reference them).

Include **hyperlinks** if documents are available on agency's website or elsewhere online.

The SAR should not be lengthy, but…

- ✓ **Each QA activity** stated in the Terms of Reference is addressed **individually** under the standards of the **ESG Part 2**

Where the procedures are the same, this should be explicitly stated so that it is clear that every activity has been addressed for every standard.

If applicable, do not forget to address the **cross-border QA activities!**

- ✓ **All the points from the EQAR eligibility confirmation** have been addressed
- ✓ The report includes sufficient **reflection, critique**, and **analysis**. SWOT and future challenges of an agency are linked with the analysis under the standards, when applicable!
- ✓ A summary table explaining **the number of activities per year and per activity** is always appreciated by the review panel (e.g. for the last five years)

Background of the process

- ✓ **Explain the development of the SAR**

Describe the means the agency has used to develop and produce the SAR – appointment of team, involvement of stakeholders, timeline, etc.

- ✓ **The report is self-standing** and self-explanatory

The main purpose of the **annexes** is to provide **further background** to the issues described, but they should not be necessary for the **basic understanding** of the evidence provided.

- ✓ **Make sure that the terminology is clear** and that the HE context the agency operates in is clearly presented

The same terminology (e.g. naming of the EQA activities) is used consistently throughout the report.

Specificities of the standards

✓ Mapping grid and the ESG 2.1

QA activities

The expectation is that the SAR will discuss how the different standards of Part I are reflected in the agency's criteria (for all QA activities listed in ToR).

ESG Part I

ESG	Evaluation of study programmes	Evaluation of doctoral schools	Evaluation of institutions	Cross-border evaluation of programmes	Cross-border evaluation of institutions
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	All standards	1-1, 1-2, 1-3	6.2.1, 1.3.1, 3.2	5.5, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10	1.1,1.2, 5.1, 5.2
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	1-1, 3-2	1-2, 2-2	2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	2.1
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	3-1, 4-2	1-2	2.2.2, 3.2, 3.1.1	1.11, 1.12, 3.1, 3.5, 4.2, 4.6, 4.7	2.1, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 5.2
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	2-1, 2-3, 3-3, 3-4, 3-6, 3-7, 3-8	1-2, 2-1, 2-2	3.1.1	1.6, 3.2	2.2, 3.1, 3.2
1.5 Teaching staff	4-1	1-1	2.3.2, 6.1.3, 6.3.1	5.1, 5.2	4.1, 5.2
1.6 Learning resources and student support	3-6, 3-5	1-1	2.2.3, 2.2.2, 2.4	1.12, 3.4, 5.4	4.2, 4.3
1.7 Information management	4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8	3-1, 3-2	6.3.3	2.1, 3.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6	5.3
1.8 Public information	1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-3, 3-3, 3-4, 4-1, 4-3, 4-6	1-1, 1-2, 3-1, 3-2	1.4, 2.2.4, 3.1.1	1.2, 1.4, 1.12	5.3, 7.1, 7.2
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	4-8, 4-2	1-1, 3-2	2.2.4	5.5, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10	5.1, 5.2

Specificities of the standards

- ✓ ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals

Explain how you address complaints as well as the appeals (separately)

- ✓ ESG 3.5 Resources (reflection is necessary!)

Stakeholders' opinion

Make sure to not only mention the agency's collaboration with different stakeholders and the means you collect feedback from them, but also discuss how the feedback is analysed and mention some of the **stakeholders' actual opinions**.

Summary of **feedback analysis** can be added as an annex.

Thank you!

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